THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (MAJOR GENERAL (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI): (a) It is not correct to say that there has been an alarming increase in deaths and casualties in the country due to road accidents. On the contrary, as per information available, the number of road accidents and number of casualties per ten thousand vehicles shows a steadily decreasing trend over the last many years.

(b) and (c) Under the regulations of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, all the vehicles are required to have compulsory insurance cover before coming on public place. It is for the Government of the respective State/Union Territories to enforce these regulations effectively so as to ensure that no uninsured vehicle comes on public place. A violation of the provision regarding having compulsory insurance cover is punishable under the Act. No information is available with this Ministry about percentage of vehicles that are plying on roads without insurance cover.

In the event of an uninsured vehicle meeting with an accident, the liability of motor vehicle owner towards the victim is to be decided by the Claims Tribunal appointed by the State/Union Territories Government, under the provisions of the Act.

Road Linking of Arawal, Jahanabad and Bihar Sharif

†309. SHRI GAYA SINGHiWill the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether road linking the three districts namely Arawal, Jahanabad and Bihar Sharif (Nalanda) is planned to be taken up under National highway;

(b) if so, when; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF'THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (MAJOR GENERAL (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI): (a) No Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) All proposals for declaration of State Highways as National Highways received from the State Governments have been returned in June, 2002 for review, based on revised criteria for declaration of new National Highways. Presently, there is ban on declaration of new National Highways, due to fund constraints. The Government may, however, consider declaration of very limited lengths of a few state Highways as National Highways during the course of Tenth Five year Plan, keeping in view the traffic needs, inter-se priority and availability of funds, after the ban is lifted.

Road Connection between Raipur and Bhubaneswar

310. SHRI SURENDRA LATH: Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to connect Bhubaneswar, the capital of Orissa with Raipur, the capital of Chhattisgarh by National Highway;

(b) whether the proposal to upgrade the State Ro^d from Berhampur in Orissa upto Raipur in Chhattisgarh via Karaput is proposal to be considered in order to implement the above proposal;

(c) if so, the steps taken in the matter, and

(d) what are the other State Roads in Orissa and Chhattisgarh which are proposed to be upgraded to provide better communication between these two States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (MAJOR GENERAL (RETD.) B.C.KHANDURI): (a) Bhubaneswar and Raipur are already connected by the following National Highways:

(i) Bhubaneswar to Cuttack (NH-5)

(ii) Cuttack to Sambalpur (NH-42)

(iii) Sambalpur to Raipur (NH-6)

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.